

# Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Terry Goddard Offers Tips to Avoid Fraudulent Charitable Appeals**

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Nov. 18, 2008) The holiday season is fast approaching, a time of year when many Arizonans give back to their communities. To help ensure a rewarding experience, Attorney General Terry Goddard recommends consumers take the following precautions when making charitable donations:

- Watch out for bills or invoices sent to you even though you never pledged money.
- Do not make a pledge until you know the facts.
- Find out how the charity will use your donation, and do not make a pledge until you know the specific purpose.
  - Ask for information about its programs and for a copy of its financial report.
  - Ask what percentage of the funds will be used for programming and how much will be spent on administrative costs.
  - Reputable charities will be happy to provide this information.
- Be careful of charities with names that sound impressive or resemble those of other organizations. Some scam artists use names similar to reputable organizations to confuse donors.
- Make sure the charity is registered with the Secretary of State's Office at [www.azsos.gov](http://www.azsos.gov).
- Ask for a telephone number of the charity. Call the charity directly; ask for financial accounting if you feel you need more information.
- Do not make cash donations. Always contribute by check. Make your check payable to the charity, never to the individual soliciting the donation.
- Be wary of emotional appeals, especially those that insist that, due to an emergency, you must send money now.
- Remember to ask for a receipt and a statement that the contribution is tax deductible.
- Be extremely skeptical of anyone asking for a donation by requesting your credit card number or bank account information over the phone.
- Several Web sites, including [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org), [www.give.org](http://www.give.org) and [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org), provide information on the financial histories of numerous charities. These can be a useful starting point for consumers looking to research companies to which they are thinking of making donations.

The Attorney General's Office offers numerous resources to help consumers stretch their dollars as far as possible this holiday season, including red flags for common holiday consumer scams, tips for choosing which charities to support and resources to ensure the gifts you give are safe and age appropriate. New information will be released each week throughout the holiday season and is available at Attorney General's Web site, [www.azag.gov](http://www.azag.gov).

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, please contact the Attorney General's Office in Phoenix at 602.542.5763; in Tucson at 520.628.6504; or outside the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas at 1.800.352.8431. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has satellite offices throughout the State with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at [www.azag.gov](http://www.azag.gov). Consumers can also file complaints online through the Web site.

For more information, contact Anne Hilby at (602) 542-8019.

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